Pass Christian Area
1699 1999
Colonization Tricentennial Committee

PASS CHRISTIAN, MS

The Tricentennial

Volume 1, Issue 13 October 30, 1998

At the past Board of Director's meeting, Dayton Robinson presented the historical significance of the last of the final three flags which make up the 13 Flags that flew over Pass Christian. The flags will be presented at the next Historical Society meeting on Monday, November 9, 1998 at 7:30 p.m. You are invited to hear Dayton's review of these flags. Of significance, the Spanish Colonial Flag is the only authentic flag in the State of Mississippi including the Gulf Coast. This one of a kind flag, is only seen elsewhere at the Cabildo in New Orleans, and was specially made for our Tricentennial Collection.

Another one of a kind, is the new Tricentennial Lapel Pin which sells for $3.00, and is available through local clubs and organizations. This is another way for our citizens to make others aware of the upcoming Tricentennial year of 1999.

Ken Austin is planning a 1999 KickOff supper to be held in January or February. Many folks have been asking about another community gathering like the very successful supper activity we had this past April. You will be kept posted.

March 30, 1999 plans for re-enactments are progressing and more details will follow. This will be an opportunity for Long Beach and Pass Christian to commemorate d'Iberville's return from exploring the Mississippi River 300 years ago.

The May 8, 1999 *Jazz in the Pass* is coming together with what will be a full-day event connection with the Jazz bands volunteering to fill the schedule board. Pete Fountain has already sent his regards and if he can't make it, he has already autographed some of his special posters and will deliver some of his CDs for auction.

Nap Cassibry

Fountainhead of Gulf Coast Genealogy

Napoleon Cassibry was born at Gulfport on August 3, 1918. Nap, as he is better known, has lived in Gulfport all of his life and has made numerous contributions not only in the form of his publications, but in the support he has rendered to writers and documenters of Gulf Coast history. These include, Dan Ellis of Pass Christian, Murray Keel of DeLisle, and Leroy Lizana of Cuevas/Pineville. Numerous others have benefited including Placide Nicaise's novel regarding the *Children of the Lily*, Cheryl Castelin's *Dubuisson Family History*, and Jerry Heitzmann's *Favre Family History.*

Nap's indepth research and development has been ongoing for the past 36 years. Although Nap is weary with health problems, his acute memory for detail is both a delight and a phenomenon to those he entrusts. Nearing the end of his journey, Nap presented most of his accumulation of personal records, documents and books to the Jackson County Archives in Pascagoula for posterity and safe keeping. Now, his lone briefcase is his sole reference library, but his alert memory recall for factual accuracy is still a great resource for the cause of heritage advocacy, which he perseveres to preserve.

(Continue at Page 2)

His most regarded publications are: *"The Ladner Odyssey"*, *"Earliest Settlers and Land Grants of Biloxi"*, and *"Jeff Davis vs Heirs of Joseph Davis."* Copies of these are at the Pass Christian Library.

Nap's search for the copious *Ladner Odyssey* was an "Odyssey" in itself for Nap personally, as he journeyed not only throughout Mississippi and the Gulf counties, but to Alabama and Louisiana in his quest of unfoldings.

Unpublished, yet of great archival significance today and for future generations to come, are the folios of well documented church and cemetery records pertaining to baptismal, matrimonial, and death certificates. These records, in their original form, could only be found in the Catholic churches of the area. Nap found it necessary to win the confidence of the clergy of several churches who would allow him access to their only primary source. In turn, he proffered each church a vital service. He xeroxed their aging records, translated them from French to English and provided a new type-written set of records for each parish church so that the clergy could remand their original source to safekeeping.

In preparing his "Odyssey", he further transcribed from his set of documents, every incident of baptism, death, and marriage to individual 3x5 index cards and sorted them by family name and chronological ordering by each family unit. Anyone familiar with the progression of genealogical records can realize that this was not as simple as it sounds. Needless to say, a number of Coastal Catholic parishes, including Pass Christian and DeLisle, have greatly benefitted by a clean translated set of historical registers.

As a graduate of Gulfport Schools and Mississippi State Uni-versity, Nap learned accounting and law. A veteran of World War II, a professional accountant, a lawyer, a businessman and a public official, Nap also served as a State Senator for twelve years.

His family has been synonymous with coastal history and have been history makers themselves. The first Cassibry was Jean who first settled in the DeLisle area. Nap's grandfather, Oscar T., operated a sawmill at the intersection of 20th Avenue and 15th Street in downtown Gulfport. At the time of incorporation, he was one of the first councilmen to serve during the first administration.

Nap's father, Oscar F., was a former mayor of Handsboro as well as a Supervisor for Beat 2, Harrison County, as well as being a founder and past Commodore of the reorganized Gulfport Yacht Club.

Three generations of the Cassibry family have identified themselves by enriching the community and political growth of Gulfport, even before its incorporation in 1898. In commemorating Gulfport's Centennial this year. It should be noted that Nap, and his daughter, Byrd, are the last living descendants of one of Gulfport's first city aldermen.

Pride of the Pass

Chief John Dubuisson modestly pursues a low profile with a strong persuasion for keeping the best police force along the coast. The Pass Christian staff consists of 12 patrolmen, each with their own vehicle, maintaining security and vigilance throughout the corporate limits of the Pass. Other Department personnel besides the Chief, is an Assistant Chief, two Criminal Detectives, a Warrants Officer, and a Narcotics Investigator. In support of the Second Street Headquarters includes a Records Clerk and four full-time Dispatchers.

The patrolmen operate during four shifts of 12 hours from seven to seven. Chief Dubuisson feels that the recent salary increases will hold his team together. Of note, is Officer Cindy Hodges, who recently graduated from DARE School at the top of her class. Her assignment will include the school systems in restricting drug activity.

The Chief encourages Seniors or invalid shut-ins who wish to be included on the R.U.O.K. roster to call 452-3300. The Dispatcher on duty places two calls daily to check the well-being of each person enrolled.

John Dubuisson has been with the Pass Christian Police Department for 23 years and has been Chief of Police for the past 15 years. Pass residents are fortunate in having such a fine police force and administrators.

Dixie Deep Freeze

In 1784, ice floes jammed the Mississippi all the way to the Gulf. There was an early fall in 1783 resulting in cold weather starting in November. By Friday, February 13, 1784, ice appeared in the river at New Orleans and for the next five days, ice-blocks of 12 to 30 feet width and 2 to 5 feet thickness were floating past. It was reported that the blocks formed an almost solid sheet which cut off crossings from one bank to the other.

The length of the whole ice mass was estimated to be 180 miles, as it floated down 1200 miles, finally passing through the river's mouth to the Gulf.

A Quickie History of Colonized Pass Christian

Pass Christian, pronounced Christi-anne, was pioneered in 1699 by French-Canadian Pierre LeMoyne D'Iberville. Soon afterward. d'Iberville and his brother, Bienville, made their foraging probes from Ship Island into the waters of the Bays of St. Louis, Biloxi, Pascagoula and Mobile. Through ensuing years, they sounded for passageway around Cat Island and entered the Bay of St Louis in seeking water passageways to the Mississippi River.

One of their entourage, Jean Baptiste Saucier, explored around the Bay of St. Louis and penetrated the various water inlets flowing into it. Another pioneering attendant, Andre Jean Penicaut, an 18 year old ship's carpenter, arrived with D'Iberville's second expedition. In his journal, he described the area around Bay St. Louis as being plentiful with buffalo, deer and bear.

According to Nap Cassibry's *The Ladner Odyssey*, Christian de L'Adnier arrived on the Coast at Mobile in 1719 aboard the Ship *"Le Marie"* from Lucerne, France. He married Marie Brunel. The genealogical work evidences birth certificates and baptismal documents of Christian's three sons named Jean Baptiste Christian Ladner born in 1724; Mathurin Christian Ladner, in 1725; and Nicholas Christian Ladner, in 1727.

In 1748, Nicholas Christian Ladner, the youngest son, moved to Cat Island where he had been bringing cattle for several years. During one of his visits to New Orleans, in 1758, he chose as his bride, Marianne Paquet. This loving couple produced eleven children. It was from this union that the two channels in the Mississippi Sound, *Pass Christian* and *Pass Marianne*, were named. Also, the City of Pass Christian was named for Nicholas Christian Ladner.

When British West Florida came under English rule, he journeyed to Mobile in 1781 to register his thirty-five year ownership claim for his portion of Cat Island. In that early document, his name was recorded as Nicholas Christian L'Adnier.

In 1788, Nicholas and Marianne also made a claim to lands available east of the Pass Christian land-grant belonging to Francois Carriere and his wife, "Widow Asmard." Historian, Charles Sullivan reported that Nicholas was driven off Cat Island by a hurricane, which caused him to settle on the mainland at present day Long Beach. There, he built a home with very tall chimneys on each end of the house. The home was later destroyed by fire, but the two chimneys continued to project skyward allowing early mariners of the Gulf to use them as landmarks. Eventually, these brick monuments called the "Chimneys", or "Old Chimneys", were leveled. The Chimneys Restaurant at Long Beach Harbor has continued to bear that name even after relocating to the beachfront from its original site, which is now occupied by Chappy's Restaurant.

Early Times - - -

Living conditions between 1780 to 1830 along the coast was controlled with little interest by the governing authorities of the English, Spanish, or even the young American Republic. As each ruling nationality took control, the early settlers were simply asked to make a pilgrimage to whichever city that was proclaimed as the military authority for the Gulf Coast. There, the settlers would pledge allegiance to a new flag and register their property in which case the grant was either concurred upon or refused. When the British wrested power from the French in 1779, there were only 111 heads of family that made land registrations for deed granting.

When the French departed, so did the clergy who had moral and social influence over the citizenry. Thereafter, infrequent visits were made from Mobile or New Orleans. It was not until the early 1840s that permanent missionaries took new hold on the souls of the settlers.

St. Paul Catholic Church celebrated its Sesquicentennial in 1997 and Trinity Episcopal will celebrate theirs in 1999.

Left to themselves, coast residents had little law and no order. Daily life was hard and peril remained all around with little or no protection by the prevailing military. Settlers eked out a living by farming, cattle raising, coal and tar production, and ate the wild animals and the fish from the bayous and the Sound. In living this pristine life, they were subject to be attacked by marauding pirates, bands of Indians, and wayward robbers.

Piracy was prevalent as treasures were hidden at safe harborage in the back bays, bayous, and rivers along the inland coast. Scottish born, Pierre Remaux, took hold of the Honey Island Swamps along the Pearl River, while the Lafitte brothers, Jean and Pierre, and Captain Pitcher plied the Sound and the Gulf from Texas to Florida.

QUEEN CITY
PESTILENCE AND JEOPARDY
by Dan Ellis

Many diseases were brought to the Gulf Coast during the early exploration and colonization period. This greatly contributed to reducing the native Indian populations as well as the immigrants who arrived to settle in the New World.

At New Orleans, between 1810 and 1837 there were fifteen epidemics of yellow fever besides the many encounters with cholera and smallpox outbreaks.

In 1830, the Asiatic cholera passed around the world to reach New Orleans on October 25, 1832. At that same time, a Yellow Fever epidemic had just subsided, resulting in deaths and citizen flight, which reduced the "Queen City's" population from 46,000 to 35,000. Within the first 20 days of the new pestilence, another 6,000 inhabitants were silenced.

Because the cemeteries were filled, bodies were buried where they were found, or carted off and dumped in the river with ballasts anchoring the corpses. It was during this period of epidemics that several thousand citizens relocated to safer havens such as Pass Christian and other areas of the Gulf Coast.

In 1853, a renewed contagion leaped into the midst of the New Orleans citizenry. During the week ending July 16, more than two hundred bodies were carted to the cemeteries. For each day of the following week, there averaged 61 deaths, which further increased during the next week to an average of 79 persons succumbing each day. From every direction there was fright, fight, and flight.

In the New Orleans cemeteries, between the 1st of June and the 1st of October, nearly eleven thousand persons were buried. This did not count the numbers who died in flight by carrying the pestilence to other regions.

The fever returned again in 1854, and again in 1855, adding another seven thousand casualties to the cause of pestilence and disease.

During all these outbreaks, the only demonstrated prevention of its spread was that of quarantine. At that time, New Orleans had such an escalated growth that the immigrant mind-set was to remain temporarily for economic purposes; therefore, cleanliness, drainage and sewerage were unheard of necessities. Health considerations were further deterred by the civil laxity of the Creoles and plantation owners. Their solution was to quarter their families outside of the city's squalor for extended periods. Wealthy families established dual residences within or surrounding the city, and at locations across Lake Pontchartrain and along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

As early as the great New Orleans Fire of March 21, 1788, when the town census reported 5,338 residents, half were decimated by the conflagration. The entire central core was reduced to ashes. Even then, the town's reconstruction did not include health security measures. It was not until 1836, that the first sign of community spirit was raised to effect the digging of the first drainage canals. Even flooding was not a great consequence before then. Ultimately, an organized levee construction system was instituted along with sewerage, drainage, and guttered streets which became layered with shells or bricks.

Note: A great source of reading about the Great Flood of 1927, the political structures, and dual residences of Pass Christian and New Orleans, is in circulation at the Library. Ask for *"The Rising Tide"* by John Barry. This book is included on Roy Stoddard's recommended list reading.

D'Iberville's Youth

In 1686, two of the most prestigious families of New France had to face each other on behalf of their children because of a not so original situation, --- love!

The protagonists were Charles LeMoyne on behalf of his son, Pierre, and for the other side Pierre Picoté de Belestre on behalf of a 19-year-old orphaned daughter in his care.

On May 10, 1686, Picoté brought suit against LeMoyne in which he accused his son Pierre of having violated his young female ward. This was considered a grave crime calling for the most severe of penalties.

At the time of the accusation, 24-year-old Pierre d'Iberville, was a lieutenant serving in the Hudson Bay area. On his return to Montreal, instead of being arrested, he was exciled to France for two years. Upon his return, on June 14, 1688, an order for his arrest was made, but it was countermanded. Needless to say, the girl, Jean Genevieve, as was customary for the times, was placed in a convent where she remained until her death in June 1721.

Membership Sign Up Appeal

Please do your share to help the Tricentennial Activities. Accomplishments todate have been many. Major service contributions have been made by hundreds of hours on the part of members serving on the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and a number of Sub-Committees.

Cultural heritage contributions have been made in the sculptured d'Iberville bust by Michelle Smith (value = $5000), the sculptured d'Iberville stone by Brian Nettles (value = $500), the painting of the Pass Christian Flag by Tazewell (value = $300), for the past four months, professional Scale Modeler Buddy Diboll has been researching and building the miniature Pass Christian Lighthouse and landscape model (value - $5,500).

This newsletter is circulated to nearly 800 homes, of which, about 150 membership certificates have been mailed to those of you who have sent in $15 or more. Please do your share to support ongoing operational.

Your contributions and donations have paid for the 13 flags which cost approximately $1,800 and the bronzing of the d'Iberville bust which cost $2,200. The flags are on display at City Hall and the d"Iberville bust is making its tour through the Pass schools. Newsletter printing and postal costs are a little more than $200 per issue. Please post checks to Tricentennial Committee, POB 354, P.C. 39571.

YES! SIGN ME UP! LET'S ALL KEEP DAYTON BUSY! ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR $15 OR MORE, FOR A TWO-YEAR TRICENTENNIAL SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

(Mail to TriCentennial/POB #354, P.C. MS, 39571)

Jazz in the Pass Update

Jenny Lou Mintz with Winston Marsalis

Bob Mintz is still laughing because the above photo was printed without its caption. A number of people have kidded Jennie Lou about her partner not looking like her husband. Both, with good humor, quipped that they hope Winston Marsalis will make an appearance for the Jazz function coming up in May.

Jenny Lou showed her strut in the Second Line at the recent Yacht Club's Jazz Brunch. Her umbrellas are a fascination to everyone.

Come to the Mardi Gras

Dana Dedeaux and Margie Hamilton are seeking Pass Christianians who would like to ride in the next Pass Mardi Gras Parade. They are finding the flat bed truck, looking in to costs, checking out doubloons, and dreaming up the decorations and costumary. All with the Tricentennial theme. If any one is interested, call Margie at 452-2435 or Dana at 255-1288.

If you have been seeking a way to get onto a float, this is your chance!

Editorial Staff

Jayme Condra	452-4224
Dan Ellis	452-3138
Dayton Robinson	452-4543

POB 354, P.C., MS, 39571

Jefferson Davis

A number of the friends of Jefferson Davis, ex-president of the Confederacy, to testify their loyalty and sympathy for him, had bought a very fine piece of property, with a commodious mansion completely furnished and had presented it to Mr. and Mrs. Davis. Their new home was but a few miles from us on the shore front, and the place soon became the mecca for all the Northern people traveling through the South. Mrs. Davis has often spoken to me of the trials and tribulations that she and her family had to undergo by the constant influx of strangers who came out of mere idle curiosity to see the celebrated Jefferson Davis. Many of those who were asked to lunch remained to dine, and was frequently the case, some slept there and had breakfast in the morning. Considering that the majority of these self-invited guests were utter strangers, and that Mr. and Mrs. Davis had been ruined by the War, and in a measure were living on the bounty of their friends, it was a real trial to their patience but they never by word nor action gave any one cause to think that they were not welcome. Mr. Davis was a very polished, courteous gentleman, slightly grave in manner, and at first sight one was impressed with the thought that they stood before one of the greatest men of this country.

In after years, I became well acquainted with Mrs. Davis and her charming daughter, Miss Winnie. They lived at the New York Hotel after my return to my old situation and subsequently followed me to the Marlborough when the New York Hotel closed. She presented me with the *Memoirs of Jefferson Davis* written by herself, which is not the least valued among my collection of books.

Mr. Davis and General Harney had been friends for many years. Both were West Point graduates and when General Harney was spending the winter at the Pass the two gentlemen were in close companionship during the General's stay.

I came to know Mr. Davis quite well and I have spent some pleasant moments in his company, and can well believe, as is said in his memoirs, "He retained his soldiery qualities to the last."

A year or so after I had left Pass Christian and returned to my old position at the New York Hotel, the telegraph one day flashed the word over the wires that Jefferson Davis was dead. The house was then, and had always been, the home of the Southern people when in New York. Several gentlemen stopping at the house, among whom were Mayor Mimmes and Mr. Howell, proprietor of the *Atlantic Constitution,* asked me if it would be proper for the house to display the American flag at half mast out of respect to Mr. Jefferson Davis' memory. I said that it should be done, and to that effect I gave an order to the head porter to put it in execution.

Passers by on Broadway dropped into the hotel office to ask why the flag was at half mast and they, on returning to the street, spread the news that the New York Hotel was floating the United States flag in memory of Mr. Davis. It was not long before General Tecumseh Sherman, who was living in the City then, came to the hotel and sent up his card to the Honorable John Jay, former Ambassador to Austria and one of the owners of the hotel. Mr. Jay and his family had apartments in the hotel. The General was shown to Mr. Jay's apartments and they both held an interesting discussion upon this flagrant action of displaying the flag. Mr. Jay sent for Mr. Cranston who, totally ignorant of what had been done, was not prepared to argue the matter, besides, if he should order the flag down after it had been raised at the suggestion of his Southern guests, he would offend the entire South. To gain time and to escape from the embarrassing situation he begged to be excused, saying he would look into the matter, which he took good care not to do.

In the mean time the grand army men got very indignant and busy. A whole army post marched into the office and angrily demanded that the flag be taken down. Some of them even threatened to tear it down in the event of their demand not being complied with. They eventually left, filling the air with what they would do if the flag was seen floating on the top of the hotel on the morrow. But in spite of their threats and boasts, it floated on the morrow and the following days, until Mr. Davis was laid to rest.

Exerpts from, *"Reminiscences of a Veteran"* was written by M. J. Crawford who was the first manager of the **Mexican Gulf Hotel** in Pass Christian.

'97 Coast Beacon News

At our recent Tricentennial Committee meeting, Adelle Bielenberg brought a copy of the *Coast Beacon* dated November 13, 1897. Some of the interesting local news included: Who stole the gun from the guards on post No. 1 Thursday night? -- Two colored men returned from Wolf river with over 400 pounds of fish. -- If we can only hold the State Board of Health off for another week, we'll win the fight against the fever. -- The danger has past. -- If you are seeking a good healthy town to spend the winter, Pass Christian is the place.

Pass Christian advertisements included: Marie Straub - Baker and Confectioner; J. Ed Hanson - Druggist and Chemist; Edward Bielenberg - Barber & Hairdresser; Town Library Reading Room - open from 9 to 9 weekdays, 1 to 6pm Sundays; Kate Schoor - Groceries, Feed and Tobacco; K.L. Thornton - Justice of the Peace; Frank Sutter - Insurance Agent; John Sutter - Artesian Wells; N. Bohn - Boots, Shoes, Hats, Clothing; Mrs. J. Miither - Midwife; R. McIntosh - The Sazarac Saloon; Estate of C. Courtenay - Dry Goods, Corn, Hay, Tin-ware; Wm. Kux - Watchmaker and Jeweler; Denis Amiel - Veterinary and Horseshoer; Brandt & Dempf - General Merchandise; Louis Schruff - Oysters and Fish; Mrs. J.H. Knost -- Dry Goods, Hats, Ribbons, Flowers, etc.; and Dufrechou's Lunch House - offering meals at all hours for 25 cents - Free Delivery. And, Northrop's prices were one-third off regular any-one-else's -- Your money back, if you want! Besides being in the furniture business, when money was scare, Edward Bielenberg advertised his Barber and Hairdresser capabilities at his Shop located in Spence's Building on Front Street.

Fall by Jessie Heitzmann

Once Summer's muse has had her fling,
And earth prepares for Winter's rest,
Nomadic birds once more take wing
As Mother Nature dons her best.

Mid air that's crisp with Autumn's bite,
And wind that Summer's warmth disowns,
Earth's waiting canvas comes to light
In all its fierce, impassioned tones.

Trees ablaze with Fall's first blush
Put Spring's subtle hues to shame,
From glowing yellow to rosy flush,
Deepest purple to crimson flame.

Ours this moment now, of glory,
Midst our dreams to keep,
God's brilliant bedtime story
Before Winter's lonely sleep.

Community Organizations

Membership Meetings

Friends of the Library
Fridays - 10 A.M.
Library Conference Hall

Rotary Club *Tuesday Noon*
Yacht Club Dining Hall

Historical Society
Second Monday
Monthly 7:30 p.m.

PASS CHRISTIAN, MS
The Tricentennial

POB 354
Pass Christian, MS 39571
Change Service Requested.

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Pass Christian, MS
Permit No. 2

ATTENTION MERCHANTS AND PROFESSIONALS!

Become a Sponsor of *The Tricentennial* newsletter. Your participation reduces the cost of this newsletter while taking your message to more than 800 readers who will appreciate your support.

Braun & Co.
Love
Pass Christian

LATTER & BLUM
INC/REALTORS
Since 1916
REALTOR
JOHN E. HARRIS, GRI
Realtor
1188 Highway 90 - Bay St. Louis, Mississippi 39520
Office 601-467-4111 · Toll Free 1-800-215-4111

COLDWELL BANKER
ALFONSO REALTY, INC.
KEN AUSTIN, GRI
REALTOR®
(228) 452-5820 DIRECT
(228)452-7618 FAX
(228)880-7658 PAGER
(228)452-0080 HOME
kaustin7@juno.com EMAIL
117 E. SCENIC DRIVE
PASS CHRISTIAN, MS 39571
Each Office Is Independently Owned and Operated

Valentino's
Fine Gifts of Love and Accessories for the Home
Edward Valentine Jurkowski
116 W. Scenic Drive
Pass Christian, MS 39571
228-452-4523
Hours: Mon-Sat 10-5:30, Sun 12-5